



The existence of man
depends on six inches
of topsoil & the water
that falls on it.....Save

Newsletter

January 2013
WINTER

Spring Forage Conference and Heart of America Grazing Conference set for February 25th and 26th in Springfield

The annual Southwest Missouri Spring Forage Conference and the annual Heart of America Grazing Conference have partnered to present an informative and educational two-day event. This year marks the 29th annual Southwest Missouri Spring Forage Conference. It is the 12th year for the Heart of America Grazing Conference which is held annually throughout a 5-state region of Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio, and Missouri.

The conference will be held Monday, February 25th and Tuesday, February 26th, 2013 at the University Plaza Hotel in Springfield, MO. Each year this conference attracts an increasing number of people interested in learning more about management strategies for forages and livestock and 2013 should draw even more attention with the two annual conferences teaming up.

This year there will be three different main speakers, along with a local humorous speaker. Monday afternoon starts with Richard McConnell from Hand N Hand Livestock Solutions, providing four hours of training on *Low Stress Livestock Handling*. Monday evening, Dr. Garry Lacefield, State Forage Specialist from the University of Kentucky, will present a talk titled *Forages: Change-Challenges-Opportunities*. Local beef producer and humorist Dr. Jerry Crownover will round out the evening with his topic- *Life is Simple*. During Tuesday's luncheon, Kathy Voth from Livestock for Landscapes LLC will give a presentation entitled *Training Your Cows to Eat Weeds*.

On Tuesday, the conference will also feature several 45-minute breakout sessions. Topics will include fescue toxicity management, grazing system layout, alfalfa management, forages and wildlife, novel endophyte fescues, selecting livestock to fit your environment, evaluating potential of different livestock enterprises, taxes and farm records, native warm season grasses, direct sales of grass-fed beef, inter-seeding annuals into pasture, and pasture renovation with livestock.

More than 30 companies and organizations will have exhibits and booths, with representatives available to discuss their products and services. Ample time is provided throughout the conference to visit with the vendors.

For the Monday sessions, registration begins at noon and the first session begins at 1:00 p.m. Monday's events conclude at 9:00 p.m. On Tuesday, registration begins at 7:30 a.m. and the conference adjourns at 3:30 p.m. Multiple options are available for attendance of this event. Participants have the option to attend Monday's *Low Stress Stock Handling* session only (\$25), all of Monday only (\$50), all of Tuesday only (\$35), and the whole 2-day conference (\$75). These rates are for advanced registration (pre-registration by February 19th). Registration fees will increase by \$10 for late registration. A prime rib dinner will be served Monday evening and is included in the \$50 or \$75 attendance options. A sliced beef luncheon will be served Tuesday, and included in the \$35 or \$75 attendance options.

To pre-register or for more information, contact the Greene County Soil and Water Conservation District at (417) 831-5246, extension 3 or visit the website at <http://springforageconference.com/> for more conference information, maps, lodging information, biographies on the main speakers and a registration form.

Stone Co. SWCD is a sponsor of this forage conference and encourages your attendance.

If you have received this publication in error or wish to be removed from the mailing list please call 417-723-8389.



PRAY FOR RAIN

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Landowner Spotlight



SPRING DEVELOPMENT

Cooperator, Jose Farley has been working with the Soil & Water District since summer of 2011 to develop a fresh water spring in Stone County by implementing a Spring Development conservation practice. We worked together in planning an efficient way to excavate the spring area, construct a concrete block dam, bury a supply line and install a 700 gallon spring tank with an overflow system. The implementation of this practice will protect and enhance ground water quality through proper collection and distribution of the ground water resource. This practice applies where livestock have free access to a spring or seep. Development of such an area provides a dependable supply of suitable water for distribution to the livestock.

Mr. Farley had visited a spring development site that was previously installed on the Clint Hetherington farm near Hurley. Mr. Farley was sold on the idea of developing a spring on his own property after viewing the efficiency of the practice and the volume of fresh water stored for the livestock. By design, the spring water is gravity fed to a permanent concrete tank with a gravel skirt and an overflow pipe is installed to handle the constant flow of water. The area around the spring is allowed to heal where livestock have trampled thus reducing soil erosion.

Being a “cooperator” implies “cooperation” and this describes Jose Farley as he worked with our technician to design an efficient plan for a permanent water supply. Using his construction experience Jose performed most of the construction with some help from a local block layer and some direction from Clint. Projects such as these are definitely labor intensive but very rewarding when a landowner is able to complete the work themselves following program standards and specs. We appreciate Jose Farley for his due diligence in meeting program deadlines, keeping record of items purchased and maintaining a great attitude as we worked together. Partnership is the key to a good working relationship.

The Stone County Soil & Water District looks forward to meeting new cooperators interested in our many programs that aim to prevent soil loss and enhance water quality. We take pride in offering you the landowner planning and financial assistance. If you have need of pasture or hay land enhancement, exclusion of forest or streams, well decommissioning, an intensive grazing system or other conservation programs please contact our office or come by and see us at 108 Cortney Lane, Crane, Missouri. We like to talk about making a difference that will benefit our streams, rivers, forests, livestock and wildlife; and benefit future generations.

SEEDING DROUGHT STRICKEN LAND

Spring is around the corner and thoughts may include renovation of pasture or hay land impacted by the extreme drought conditions of 2012. It takes grass to grow beef and healthy soil and rain to grow grass. A simple soil test can help determine the fertility and PH of your soil; a necessary step for proper application of lime and fertilizer or litter on the land. Soil test results are not perfect but they are a fair assessment of current soil conditions and following the recommendations is a good starting point.

With the past two growing seasons having been affected by drought, in addition to the lack of precipitation, our local soils have a tendency to lose moisture rapidly due to their structure and slope. The soil becomes dry causing poor grass stands or loss of clover-legume stands, which can all lead to soil erosion. These fields need to be evaluated and may qualify for State cost-share assistance for re-establishment or improvement.

To put soil erosion in perspective: During a rain event, if a ONE acre field unprotected by forage lost one-one hundredth (.01) of an inch top soil it would have lost ONE TON of soil! A runoff of one-tenth (.10) of an inch would be a soil loss of 10 TONS! With no forage to hold, catch or create a filter, much of this soil along with manure and sediment makes its way to the local streams, rivers or lakes. The loss of top soil gives the plant less bedding and organic matter for root development while diminishing community water quality.

The temptation is understandable as cattlemen weighed the options of stretching grass as far as possible to prevent or delay, liquidating herds. Now, we await much needed "drought-ending rains" to start rebuilding forage production. Forages have been hurt by long-term drought and it's what you don't see that makes the difference. Besides the possible need for soil nutrients, the crucial root system has been tapped. When grass was growing last year, the need to graze more or cut more hay then reduced top growth and pulled from the root system.

Pasture / hay establishment expense can be offset by program assistance offered by the local Soil & Water Conservation District to include sharing the cost of recommended lime, fertilizer, seed and no-till equipment. Contracts for grass-legume establishment may pay up to \$85 per acre and \$35 per acre for vegetative improvement by planting legumes only. Eligibility for seeding programs will be pre-determined by technical staff using information including field inventories, slope and soil type. A field visit is necessary for this determination.

If interested in learning more about your Soil & Water Conservation District seeding program or any of our cost share programs, please contact our office at 417-723-8389, Monday through Friday, 8am. - 4pm. We are always available to discuss programs or schedule a field visit.

For equipment rental contact our equipment manager, J. C. Bowling at 839-9965.

Hoping this new year brings you rain.....plenty of rain; and may you prosper.

"The existence of man depends on 6 inches of topsoil and the water that falls on it "

Tall Fescue -On behalf of the State Grazing- lands Specialist: Mark Kennedy, Houston, Mo

Tall fescue covers more acres in Missouri than any other species - an estimated 7 million acres. Some of the reasons that tall fescue is so popular is that it is very adapted, hardy, and persistent. Tall fescue provides good ground cover for conservation efforts and provides a long growing season for the livestock industry. However, most of the tall fescue grown in Missouri is infected with an endophyte (fungus) that produces ergot-alkaloids which are toxic to cattle, sheep, equine, quail, rabbits, songbirds, deer and numerous other species. Specialists at the University of Missouri estimate that the toxic effects of endophyte-infected tall fescue cost the Missouri beef industry \$160 million annually.

Several years ago endophyte-free tall fescue was planted on thousands of acres and found to lack persistence. Most stands thinned to sub-feasible plant populations after two or three years. Advanced technology later led to the development of varieties of tall fescue inoculated with strains of endophyte known to lend hardiness, giving long term persistence to the plant without producing toxic levels of the harmful alkaloids. The varieties with the new technology, called 'novel endophyte tall fescue' or 'livestock friendly tall fescue' have been available in the market place for over twelve years, and adoption by land owners has been minimal. Multiple barriers exist that keep land owners from converting their toxic tall fescue stands to novel endophyte varieties, such as education, lost production during the year of conversion, and cost of establishment.

With this in mind, a core group of MU agronomy and livestock specialists developed the idea to form an alliance of MU specialists, government agency representatives, agri-businesses, non-profit organizations and producers to promote the replacement of toxic tall fescue with a non-toxic endophyte or novel endophyte fescue. The alliance has 4 main goals: 1) educate producers and agency staffs about fescue toxicosis, new available technology, and how to successfully replace toxic tall fescue through 1-day "Tall Fescue Renovation" workshops; 2) To help producers with the cost by providing incentives in the form of cost share and company rebates; 3) regulate the seed industry to insure persistent stands of high quality grass for livestock; and 4) Promote the new technology and products available through conferences, workshops, tours, newsletters and the popular press.

The above mentioned workshops are set to be held this year in Mt. Vernon at the MU Southwest Research Center on March 18 and at Linneus at the Forage Systems Research Center on March 21. The workshops will be very beneficial to those producers who have signed up for, or are considering, the Endophyte Infected Fescue Renovation incentives offered through the 2013 EQIP.

If you have any questions please contact Mark Kennedy, State Grazing-land Specialist, Houston, Missouri by phone at 417-838-8866 or by email at mark.kennedy@mo.usda.gov.

STONE COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

108—B CORTNEY LANE
CRANE, MISSOURI 65633
PHONE: 417-723-8389

www.swcd.mo.gov/stone

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Upcoming Events

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI EXTENSION

83RD Annual Stone County Livestock & Forage Conference

Don't miss out on this year's conference. Last year, we had record numbers in attendance and there are similar expectations this year. Please **pre-register** by calling the extension office at 357-6812 or Soil & Water District staff **by Feb. 6th**; this reserves your meal. Participants are eligible for discounted soil tests.

Conference date is **Monday, Feb. 11, 2013 at 6-9 p.m.** at Hurley Baptist Church (1.5 mi. East of Hurley on Hwy A).

The Southwest Mo. Cattlemen's Assoc. will once again grill our ribeye steaks. Discussion will focus on :

Rebuilding the Beef Herd Following the Drought – State Ag Bus. Specialist- Dr Ron Plain
Alternative Forage Farmer Panel: Bo Chastain, Kenny Bowling, Kenneth Essary
Cattle Theft Prevention – Stone Co. Sheriff, Doug Rader
Weed Control Following Drought – Tim Schnakenberg, Regional Agronomy Specialist

This program made possible by Stone County Extension Council and Stone Co. Commission.